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**READ FOR A LIFETIME
2020 – 2021 LIST**

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood

Trevor Noah

264 pages

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

Call of the Wild

Jack London

71 pages

The story is set in the Yukon during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush—a period in which strong sled dogs were in high demand. The novel's central character is a dog named Buck, a domesticated dog living at a ranch in the Santa Clara Valley of California as the story opens. Stolen from his home and sold into service as sled dog in Alaska, he reverts to a wild state. Buck is forced to fight in order to dominate other dogs in a harsh climate. Eventually he sheds the veneer of civilization, relying on primordial instincts and learned experience to emerge as a leader in the wild.

Circe

Madeline Miller

416 pages

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child - not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring, like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power - the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur; Daedalus and his doomed son, Icarus; the murderous Medea; and, of course, wily Odysseus.

Cruel Prince, The

Holly Black

416 pages

Jude was seven years old when her parents were murdered and she and her two sisters were stolen away to live in the treacherous High Court of Faerie. Ten years later, Jude wants nothing more than to belong there, despite her mortality. But many of the fey despise humans. Especially Prince Cardan, the youngest and wickedest son of the High King. To win a place at the Court, she must defy him--and face the consequences. In doing so, she becomes embroiled in palace intrigues and deceptions, discovering her own capacity for bloodshed. But as civil war threatens to drown the Courts of Faerie in violence, Jude will need to risk her life in a dangerous alliance to save her sisters, and Faerie itself.

Curse So Dark and Lovely, A

Brigid Kemmerer

512 pages

It once seemed so easy to Prince Rhen, the heir to Emberfall. Cursed by a powerful enchantress to repeat the autumn of his eighteenth year over and over, he knew he could be saved if a girl fell for him. But that was before he learned that at the end of each autumn, he would turn into a vicious beast hell-bent on destruction. That was before he destroyed his castle, his family, and every last shred of hope. Nothing has ever been easy for Harper. With her father long gone, her mother dying, and her brother barely holding their family together



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while constantly underestimating her because of her cerebral palsy, she learned to be tough enough to survive. But when she tries to save someone else on the streets of Washington, DC, she's instead somehow sucked into Rhen's cursed world.

Dig

A.S. King

400 pages

Five estranged cousins are lost in a maze of their family's tangled secrets. Their grandparents, former potato farmers Gottfried and Marla Hemmings, managed to trade digging spuds for developing subdivisions and now they sit atop a million-dollar bank account—wealth they've refused to pass on to their adult children or their five teenage grandchildren. "Because we want them to thrive," Marla always says. But for the Hemmings cousins, "thriving" feels a lot like slowly dying of a poison they started taking the moment they were born. As the rot beneath the surface of the Hemmings' white suburban respectability destroys the family from within, the cousins find their ways back to one another, just in time to uncover the terrible cost of maintaining the family name.

Don't Get Caught

Kurt Dinan

338 pages

When Max receives a mysterious invite from the untraceable, epic prank-pulling Chaos Club, he has to ask: why him? After all, he's Mr. 2.5 GPA, Mr. No Social Life. He's Just Max. And his favorite heist movies have taught him this situation calls for Rule #4: Be suspicious. But it's also his one shot to leave Just Max in the dust. Max and four fellow students—who also received invites—are standing on the newly defaced water tower when campus security "catches" them. Definitely a setup. And this time, Max has had enough. It's time for Rule #7: *Always get payback*. Let the prank war begin.

Field Guide to the North American Teenager

Ben Philippe

384 pages

Norris Kaplan is clever, cynical, and quite possibly too smart for his own good. A Black French Canadian, he knows from watching American sitcoms that those three things don't bode well when you are moving to Austin, Texas. Plunked into a new high school and sweating a ridiculous amount from the oppressive Texas heat, Norris finds himself cataloging everyone he meets: the Cheerleaders, the Jocks, the Loners, and even the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. Making a ton of friends has never been a priority for him, and this way he can at least amuse himself until it's time to go back to Canada, where he belongs. Yet against all odds, those labels soon become actual people to Norris...like loner Liam, who makes it his mission to befriend Norris, or Madison the beta cheerleader, who is so nice that it has to be a trap. Not to mention Aarti the Manic Pixie Dream Girl, who might, in fact, be a real love interest in the making.

Fountains of Silence, The

Ruta Sepetys

512 pages

Madrid, 1957. Under the fascist dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, Spain is hiding a dark secret. Meanwhile, tourists and foreign businessmen flood into Spain under the welcoming promise of sunshine and wine. Among them is 18-year-old Daniel Matheson, the son of an oil tycoon, who arrives in Madrid with his parents hoping to connect with the country of his mother's birth through the lens of his camera. Photography - and fate - introduce him to Ana, whose family's interweaving obstacles reveal the lingering grasp of the Spanish Civil War - as well as chilling definitions of fortune and fear. Daniel's photographs leave him with uncomfortable questions amidst shadows of danger. He is backed into a corner of difficult decisions to protect those he loves. Lives and hearts collide, revealing an incredibly dark side to the sunny Spanish city.



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Haunted, The

Danielle Vega

256 pages

Clean slate. That's what Hendricks Becker-O'Malley's parents said when they moved their family to the tiny town of Drearfield, New York. Hendricks wants to lay low and forget her dark, traumatic past. Forget *him*. But things don't go as planned. Hendricks learns from new friends at school that Steele House--the fixer upper her parents are so excited about, is notorious in town. Local legend says it's haunted. But Hendricks isn't sure if it's the demons of her past haunting her or of the present. Voices whisper in her ear as she lays in bed. Doors lock on their own. And, then, one night, things take a violent turn. With help from the mysterious boy next door, Hendricks makes it her mission to take down the ghosts . . . if they don't take her first.

Heroine

Mindy McGinnis

421 pages

When a car crash sidelines Mickey just before softball season, she has to find a way to hold on to her spot as the catcher for a team expected to make a historic tournament run. Behind the plate is the only place she's ever felt comfortable, and the painkillers she's been prescribed can help her get there. The pills do more than take away pain; they make her feel good. With a new circle of friends - fellow injured athletes, others with just time to kill - Mickey finds peaceful acceptance and people with whom words come easily, even if it is just the pills loosening her tongue. But as the pressure to be Mickey Catalan heightens, her need increases, and it becomes less about pain and more about want, something that could send her spiraling out of control.

Hillbilly Elegy

J.D. Vance

291 pages

From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class. *Hillbilly Elegy* is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis - that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over 40 years, has been reported on with growing frequency and alarm but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

I Was Their American Dream: a Graphic Memoir

Malaka Gharib

160 pages

I Was Their American Dream is at once a coming-of-age story and a reminder of the thousands of immigrants who come to America in search for a better life for themselves and their children. The daughter of parents with unfulfilled dreams themselves, Malaka navigated her childhood chasing her parents' ideals, learning to code-switch between her family's Filipino and Egyptian customs, adapting to white culture to fit in, crushing on skater boys, and trying to understand the tension between holding onto cultural values and trying to be an all-American kid.

Internment

Samira Ahmed

401 pages

Set in a horrifying near-future United States, 17-year-old Layla Amin and her parents are forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of newly made friends also trapped within the internment camp, her boyfriend on the outside, and an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the internment camp's director and his guards.

Jackpot

Nic Stone

359 pages

Meet Rico: high school senior and afternoon-shift cashier at the Gas 'n' Go, who after school and work races home to take care of her younger brother. Every. Single. Day. When Rico sells a jackpot-winning lotto ticket, she thinks maybe her luck will finally change, but only if she - with some assistance from her popular and wildly rich



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classmate, Zan - can find the ticket holder who hasn't claimed the prize. But what happens when have and have-nots collide? Will this investigative duo unite...or divide?

Just Mercy: Adapted for Young Adults

Bryan Stevenson

271 pages

Acclaimed lawyer and social justice advocate Bryan Stevenson offers a glimpse into the lives of the wrongfully imprisoned and his efforts to fight for their freedom. Stevenson's story is one of working to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society - the poor, the wrongly convicted, and those whose lives have been marked by discrimination and marginalization. Through this adaptation, young people of today will find themselves called to action and compassion in the pursuit of justice.

Little Women

Louisa May Alcott

578 pages

As a New England mother struggles to support her family in the wake of her husband's service in the Civil War, her four daughters struggle, too - caught between childhood dreams and the realities of burgeoning adulthood. For Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March, raised in integrity and virtue, negotiating the right path in life means making choices that will either narrow or expand their destinies.

Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks

Jason Reynolds

204 pages

This story was going to begin like all the best stories. With a school bus falling from the sky. But no one saw it happen. They were all too busy. Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

Monday's Not Coming

Tiffany D. Jackson

432 pages

Monday Charles is missing, and only Claudia seems to notice. Claudia and Monday have always been inseparable—more sisters than friends. So when Monday doesn't turn up for the first day of school, Claudia's worried. When she doesn't show for the second day, or second week, Claudia knows that something is wrong. Monday wouldn't just leave her to endure tests and bullies alone. Not after last year's rumors and not with her grades on the line. Now Claudia needs her best—and only—friend more than ever. But Monday's mother refuses to give Claudia a straight answer, and Monday's sister April is even less help. As Claudia digs deeper into her friend's disappearance, she discovers that no one seems to remember the last time they saw Monday. How can a teenage girl just vanish without anyone noticing that she's gone?

Patron Saints of Nothing

Randy Ribay

436 pages

Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to the University of Michigan in the fall. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

Pet

Akwaeke Emezi

208 pages

There are no monsters anymore, or so the children in the city of Lucille are taught. Jam and her best friend, Redemption, have grown up with this lesson all their life. But when Jam meets Pet, a creature made of horns and colors and claws, who emerges from one of her mother's paintings and a drop of Jam's blood, she must reconsider what she's been told. Pet has come to hunt a monster, and the shadow of something grim lurks in Redemption's house. Jam must fight not only to protect her best friend, but also to uncover the truth, and the answer to the question--*How do you save the world from monsters if no one will admit they exist?*



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Truly Devious: A Mystery

Maureen Johnson

423 pages

Ellingham Academy is a famous private school in Vermont for the brightest thinkers, inventors, and artists. It was founded by Albert Ellingham, an early 20th century tycoon, who wanted to make a wonderful place full of riddles, twisting pathways, and gardens. "A place", he said, "where learning is a game." Shortly after the school opened, his wife and daughter were kidnapped. The only real clue was a mocking riddle listing methods of murder, signed with the frightening pseudonym "Truly, Devious". It became one of the great unsolved crimes of American history. True-crime aficionado Stevie Bell is set to begin her first year at Ellingham Academy, and she has an ambitious plan: She will solve this cold case.

Two Can Keep a Secret

Karen McManus

331 pages

Echo Ridge is small-town America. Ellery's never been there, but she's heard all about it. Her aunt went missing there at age 17. And only five years ago, a homecoming queen put the town on the map when she was killed. Now, Ellery has to move there to live with a grandmother she barely knows. The town is picture-perfect, but it's hiding secrets. And before school even begins for Ellery, someone has declared open season on homecoming, promising to make it as dangerous as it was five years ago. Then, almost as if to prove it, another girl goes missing. Ellery knows all about secrets. Her mother has them; her grandmother does too. And the longer she's in Echo Ridge, the clearer it becomes that everyone there is hiding something. The thing is, secrets are dangerous - and most people aren't good at keeping them. Which is why in Echo Ridge, it's safest to keep your secrets to yourself.

Wilder Girls

Rory Power

348 pages

It's been eighteen months since the Raxter School for Girls was put under quarantine. Since the Tox hit and pulled Hetty's life out from under her. It started slow. First the teachers died one by one. Then it began to infect the students, turning their bodies strange and foreign. Now, cut off from the rest of the world and left to fend for themselves on their island home, the girls don't dare wander outside the school's fence, where the Tox has made the woods wild and dangerous. They wait for the cure they were promised as the Tox seeps into everything. But when Byatt goes missing, Hetty will do anything to find her, even if it means breaking quarantine and braving the horrors that lie beyond the fence. And when she does, Hetty learns that there's more to their story, to their life at Raxter, than she could have ever thought true.

With the Fire on High

Elizabeth Acevedo

395 pages

Ever since she got pregnant freshman year, Emoni Santiago's life has been about making the tough decisions—doing what has to be done for her daughter and her abuela. The one place she can let all that go is in the kitchen, where she adds a little something magical to everything she cooks, turning her food into straight-up goodness. Even though she dreams of working as a chef after she graduates, Emoni knows that it's not worth her time to pursue the impossible. Yet despite the rules she thinks she has to play by, once Emoni starts cooking, her only choice is to let her talent break free.